

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Dear Mr. President:

The recent increase in insurgent operations highlights the urgent need to deploy Iraqi military forces into critical areas, such as downtown Baghdad, that can test – and hopefully, validate – their new capabilities.

Since late 2003, we have trained and equipped over 100 Iraqi Army battalions. We understand that of these forces, 6 Iraqi Army division headquarters, 30 brigades, and 89 battalions are in the lead in their respective areas of operations, representing about a 25 percent increase over the last 3 months. Moreover, Iraqis are now responsible for the stability and security of 2 of the 18 Iraqi provinces – Muthanna and Dhi Qar.

In light of this progress, we urge you to accelerate the process of deploying Iraqi forces to security environments that force them to engage in actual difficult military operations. Such operations will allow the forces to become battle-hardened. Those experiences would help coalition forces, which are responsible for training Iraqis, to gauge Iraqi military capabilities and make the adjustments necessary to effect a successful transition of security responsibilities. Finally, those experiences would help validate to the Iraqi people that their own military forces can indeed take on responsibility for stability and security throughout the entirety of their country.

It is crucial that both the U.S. and Iraqi governments recognize that as the battle in Iraq has intensified, so has the need to send Iraqi battalions into the heart of battle. Now is exactly the time to do so.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

Cc: Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld